WINGSPAN

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings! This issue of *Wingspan* contains a very important call for nominations. We are seeking candidates for four Director positions scheduled for re-election this year, along with candidates for the position of Secretary. Judy Henckel, who has done the latter job so well for the past four years, has decided (deservedly) to retire. This is an incredibly important position for RRF, and anyone who knows how things work behind the scenes will tell you Judy has made all the difference; she certainly has made my job as President a breeze. If you really want to make a contribution to RRF and you're an organized person, please consider putting your talents to work in this position!

With regard to the Director jobs, these, too, are very important for RRF. As you probably know, collectively the Directors make most of the important decisions that determine the future direction of RRF. RRF is strongest when we have a full compliment of active Directors bringing representation of interests from around the world. Unfortunately, some members who might be very qualified in other ways to serve as a Director, particularly members from outside the US, have been reluctant to run because of a policy requirement that Directors be willing and able to attend each year's face-to-face board meeting at our annual conference. The current Board of Directors has discussed this issue at some length, and has adopted a new policy relative to meeting attendance. The call for nominations indicates that for Directors, "attendance at the annual board meeting during the annual conferences, as often as possible during the term, is strongly encouraged." The relaxation of this policy recognizes both the importance of some face-to-face interaction among the Directors and officers, but also the fact that most RRF business today is done over e-mail. Given the latter consideration, and recognizing that travel costs to the annual conference can be prohibitive, the Board felt the change was warranted. We hope this will increase the pool of candidates willing to consider serving as a Director. If you care about RRF and are willing to devote some time and attention to our future, please consider tossing your hat into the ring for one of these positions.

I want to again thank Dan Varland, Angela Matz, Rick Holderman, others on the local committee, and the California Hawking Club for a great annual conference in Bakersfield. The meeting was academically, socially, and financially a tremendous success, thanks to the efforts of all these folks. If you missed Bakersfield, you have another chance right around the corner, because our next conference is scheduled for Green Bay, Wisconsin, 12-16 October 2005. The Green Bay meeting looks like another winner, so make your plans early and don't miss out. Finally, remember to check the RRF web site (**http://biology.boisestate.edu/raptor/**) for current RRF e-mail agendas and agenda responses. Carl Marti and Judy Henckel are doing a great job keeping the site current so you can stay informed; please take advantage of their efforts!

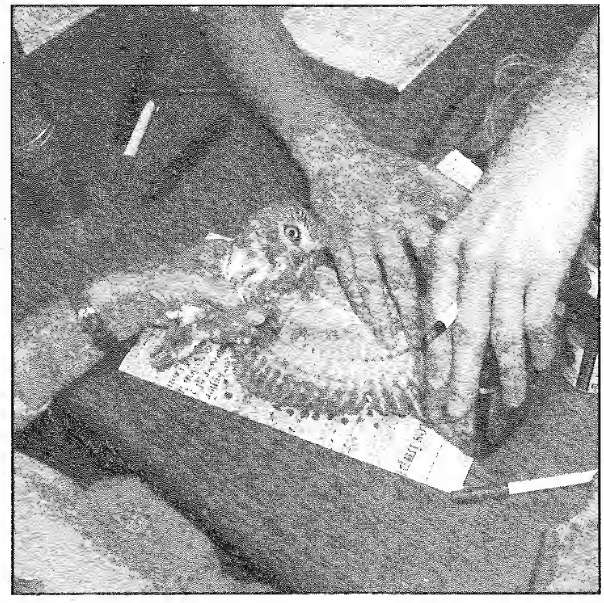
Best regards,

Brian

## RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION
## 2005 ANNUAL MEETING

### Green Bay, Wisconsin
### 12-16 October

The RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2005 annual meeting will be held from 12-16 October at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay, Wisconsin (**http://www.regencygb.com/convention.html**). The meeting will be hosted by the Cofrin Center for Biodiversity, which is part of the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay (**http://www.uwgb.edu/biodiversity**). Green Bay is a thriving community with many attractions (**http://www.titletown.org/default.asp**) located in eastern Wisconsin on one of the largest freshwater estuarine ecosystems in the world. A substantial fall raptor migration occurs along Green Bay and the nearby Lake Michigan shore, including thousands of Saw-whet Owls and other species characteristic of eastern North America and Canada. One special session, on raptor education, has been identified to date (see description on next page). Field trips include a visit to the Linwood Springs Research Station near Stevens Point to observe Saw-whet Owl banding (see photo) and an outing to observe raptor migration on the Lake Michigan shore. Details on the meeting are posted and updated periodically on the RRF web site at **http://biology.boisestate.edu/raptor** or, for general information, contact RRF Conference Committee Chair, DAN VARLAND (phone: 1-360-538-4582, e-mail: daniel.varland@rayonier.com). Abstracts for the scientific program are due June 30; for information on the scientific program, contact ANGELA MATZ, Scientific Program Chair (phone: 1-907-456-0442, e-mail: angela_matz@fws.gov).



Wing-marking a Saw-whet Owl during banding at the Linwood Springs Research Station of RRF Member, Eugene Jacobs. The station is near Stevens Point, Wisconsin and will be the focus of a field trip during the annual meeting in Green Bay this fall.

## SPECIAL SESSION ON RAPTOR EDUCATION at the RRF 2005 ANNUAL MEETING

We would like to gather raptor educators from around the country, both those who care for live birds and those who do not. We will discuss what is educational and how to get the message across, from program content to methods of presentation; we will also cover the "big picture" of conservation and habitat preservation. Presenters from raptor organizations will discuss topics on bird care: which birds to use, raptor housing and enclosures, diets, transportation, bird health, enlisting volunteers, and volunteer responsibilities. The federal regulations in place for keeping live birds will be explored, and finally we would like to have actual raptor programs presented for critique by local students. This special session will be comprised of a series of 20-minute presentations. If you would like to participate or for more information, contact session organizer KATE DAVIS, Executive Director, Raptors of the Rockies (phone: 1-406-829-6436, e-mail: raptors@montana.com, web: **http://www.raptorsoftherockies.org**).

## CALL FOR RRF RESOLUTIONS

Current research and conservation issues often are debated at RRF annual conferences, and resolutions are presented to the membership for endorsement. Proposed resolutions must first be submitted to the RRF Resolutions Committee Chair, so they can be evaluated by the committee. Only RRF members may propose resolutions. Proposed resolutions that the committee finds to be appropriate are forwarded to the RRF Board of Directors, in advance of the board's annual meeting (held in conjunction with the RRF annual conference). Resolutions approved by the board are immediately posted for review by RRF members, and then are voted upon by the membership at the RRF annual business meeting. If you intend to propose a resolution, submit a draft version to the Resolutions Committee Chair, Michael J. McGrady, Am Rosenhugel 59, A-3500 Krems, Austria (e-mail: mikejmcgrady@aol.com, phone/fax: 43-2732-72028) before July 1, 2005.


### RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION

(FOUNDED 1966)

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VICE-PRESIDENT: David M. Bird
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*Wingspan* is mailed twice each year to all members of the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF). It is also available to non-members at a subscription rate of US$10 per year. *The Journal of Raptor Research* (ISSN 0892-1016) is published quarterly and available to individuals for US$40 per year (US$20 per year for students, and for regular members in certain nations) and to libraries and institutions for US$65 per year. Add US$5 for destinations outside of the United States. There is a US$3 surcharge for memberships renewed after November 15. Persons interested in birds of prey are invited to join RRF. For information about subscriptions or membership, please contact: Ornithological Societies of North America, 5400 Bosque Boulevard, Suite 680, Waco, TX 76710, USA; 1-254-399-9636 (phone); 1-254-776-3767 (fax); business@osnabirds.org (e-mail); **http://www.osnabirds.org** (web).

## 2004 RRF AWARD COMMITTEE REPORT

by Petra Bohall Wood

Several changes were made to the RRF Awards Committee since last year:

- The Tully and Amadon grants were combined into one committee chaired by Carole Griffiths. Kim Titus stepped down as chair of the Tully committee. Thanks to Kim for his many years as chair of the Tully committee.

- The Cade and Hamerstrom selection committees were combined into one selection committee chaired by Clint Boal; a new combined nomination committee was formed and chaired by David Andersen. Brian Walton stepped down as chair of the Cade committee; thanks to Brian for his years of service.

- The Andersen award committee is now chaired by Rick Gerhardt; Laurie Goodrich stepped down as chair. Thanks to Laurie for her many years as chair.

- Amounts awarded for grants were changed to those approved by the RRF Board of Directors. Thanks to the financial planning committee, particularly chair of the committee Mike Kochert, and to the board for completing this work.

**The William C. Andersen Student Presentation Award** (*Committee*: Rick Gerhardt, Chair; Jeff Smith; Colleen Lenihan; Carol McIntyre; John Smallwood; Geoff Holroyd; Helen Trefry; Jason Duxbury)
*Recipients*:
1st place oral presentation: **Diego Sustaita**, California State University, Northridge "An anatomical comparison of the hindlimb and jaw of North American hawks and falcons in relation to prey procurement"
2nd place oral presentation: **Nicole Taylor**, Boise State University "Nestling sex ratio variation in Burrowing Owls (*Athene cunicularia*)"
1st place poster presentation: **Corey Riding**, Boise State University "Effects of nest cleanliness on burrow reuse by Burrowing Owls (*Athene cunicularia*)"

**The James R. Koplin Student Travel Award** (*Committee*: Patricia Hall, Chair; Joan Morrison; Jim Harper) *Recipient*: **Nicole Taylor**, Boise State University "Nestling sex ratio variation in Burrowing Owls (*Athene cunicularia*)"

**Amadon and Tully Grants** (*Committee*: Carole Griffiths, Chair; Joelle Gehring)
Amadon Grant:
*Recipients*:
**Muhammad Iqbal**, South Sumatra, Indonesia "Compilation of raptor notes in Sumatra, Indonesia"
**Sara Ress**, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville "Use of stable hydrogen isotopes to identify and assess yearly variation of natal origins among raptors migrating through the Florida Keys"
Tully Grant: no applications received

**Brown Grant** (*Committee*: Jeff Lincer, Chair; Steve Hoffman; Alan Kemp; Dick Clark)
*Recipient*: **Graham D. Fairhurst** "Reproductive ecology and movements of African goshawks in fragmented landscapes of the Taita Hills, Kenya"

## ASIAN VULTURE CRISIS PROJECT: 2004 UPDATE

by Munir Virani & Rick Watson

The catastrophic collapse of populations of three species of vulture in South Asia (*Gyps bengalensis, G. indicus*, and *G. tenuirostris*) resulted in their classification in 2000 by the IUCN, The World Conservation Union as *critically endangered.* These species represent half of all raptors classified in this most precarious state of imminent global extinction.

Working with local partners in Pakistan and Nepal since 2000, The Peregrine Fund's research was the first to identify the cause of the catastrophic decline in South Asian vultures. We found that at least 85% of vulture mortality in the wild was due to a single cause, poisoning from the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac, and we established that residues of diclofenac can occur in sufficient amounts in carcasses of normally treated livestock to be lethal to *Gyps* vultures. Subsequent studies have corroborated our discovery and demonstrated that diclofenac poisoning is at least the primary cause of the vulture population crash in South Asia.

Based on our vulture population studies in Pakistan and data contributed by others to the Asian Vulture Population Project (see **http://www.peregrinefund.org/vulture/**), we believe that at least two of the three vulture species, *Gyps bengalensis* and *G. tenuirostris*, may be closer to extinction than we believed even one year ago. We have a very small window of opportunity--months rather than years--to take remedial action to save these avian scavengers that have important ecological, economic, and religious values.

In February 2004, The Peregrine Fund initiated conservation interventions at a summit meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal where we presented the scientific evidence behind our discovery to the governments and conservation organizations of India, Pakistan, and Nepal. As a result, governments publicly acknowledged that they carry the responsibility for controlling the veterinary use of diclofenac and they pledged to support vulture conservation and restoration efforts. Options for the recovery of vultures were proposed and are being pursued by national governments and major international and national conservation organizations active in the region. The result is a growing effort by other organizations and individuals towards vulture conservation.

In addition, we began work to help conserve vulture populations by:

1) Reducing mortality of *Gyps bengalensis* in the wild by providing clean food near the largest known remaining colony at Toawala, Pakistan, and measuring the effect of this provisioning on mortality and behavior of vultures to asses the effectiveness of this method.

2) Providing knowledge and guidance to non-governmental organizations in Pakistan, especially WWF-Pakistan which has taken the lead in establishing a captive breeding program for vultures in that country.

3) Providing important vulture population information to governments and the public by:

a. recording and quantifying vulture populations throughout the sub-continent through field surveys and by encouraging contributions to the Asian Vulture Population Project website, and

b. counting vultures and measuring breeding and mortality at the two largest known remaining breeding colonies of *Gyps bengalensis* and *Gyps indicus* at Toawala and Nagar Parkar, respectively.

Our efforts will continue for the next year at least, but no efforts will succeed unless diclofenac is removed from the vultures' food source, which we believe urgently requires government enforced bans on the veterinary use of this non-essential therapeutic drug.

## PETE DUNNE

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

### RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION
### 1991 ANNUAL MEETING
**Tulsa, Oklahoma**

*Introduction by Dan Varland*

***Introduction**: Recently, fellow RRF member Suzanne Tomlinson and I were driving to the beach at Ocean Shores, Washington to do some raptor survey work when she began talking about one of her favorite author-naturalists, Pete Dunne. I mentioned to her that I had heard Pete give the keynote address at the RRF meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma years earlier. I had so enjoyed his presentation that when he was done I asked him for a copy, which he kindly provided. Upon return from fieldwork at Ocean Shores that day, I re-read Pete's speech and later gave Suzanne a copy. We both found his remarks thought provoking and still relevant today. I sent Pete a copy of his speech and asked his permission to print it in "Wingspan." He said sure, and returned the original version with little revision.*

*As in 1991, Pete remains on staff at the New Jersey Audubon Society where currently he is Vice President of Natural History Information and Editor of "New Jersey Audubon Magazine." He has written numerous books on bird watching including, with David Sibley and Clay Sutton, "Hawks in Flight." I'm happy to report that Pete has agreed to be our keynote speaker at the joint meeting of RRF and the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) in Allentown, Pennsylvania in 2007. His presentation will be Thursday, September 13. Be there!*

*Back in 1991, the George M. Sutton Avian Research Center played a key role in meeting planning (for current information on this important conservation organization, see http://www.suttoncenter.org). Conservation biologist Thomas Lovejoy was asked by center staff to give the keynote, but he was unable to do so. Pete graciously agreed to fill in!*

***Keynote Address**:*

Thank you. It is an honor to stand here and a privilege to be in your company.

As most of you have already assessed, I'm not Tom Lovejoy, and I apologize for not being Mr. Lovejoy or knowing what it is he might have wanted to say to you this morning. But, like you I have a certain un-abiding appreciation for birds of prey. This address is bound by the conservation thread that Keven Colbert of the Sutton Avian Research Center asked of it and ...

I have a story I'd like to tell you. Since when has an Irishman not had a story, right? Unlike many other Irish stories this one is true. Poignant and true.

Half a lifetime ago, I was working as a weekend naturalist at the state park in Cape May Point, New Jersey. Handing out brochures and trail maps; struggling to make enthusiastic responses to questions that are patently routine.

"Do we have a bathroom?" Yes sir, beautiful bathroom. Just rotate yourself 180 degrees, turn left, take the second door on the right and look for the glint of porcelain. Your tax dollars at work, sir.

Anyway, one afternoon, this ... Gentleman more or less stalked up to the center. Stopped at the door. Squinted into the room. He was a big man with the complexion of a cadaver and a body that looked like it had been slept in.

He was wearing turquoise Bermuda shorts, matching knee length sox, and a Hawaiian print shirt boasting colors that even Timothy Leary never dreamed of.

It goes without saying he was smoking a cigar. One of those long, fat ones that smell just about as nasty as they look.

I figured him for the owner of a small, retail chain of liquor stores.

He figured immediately that I was the impediment standing between him and having a nice day.

"Wha's ta do heah?" he demanded, in a voice that sort of jump-started the consonants and burned rubber on the vowels, the way people who speak New Jersey do.

I told him that southbound migration has started and that dowitchers and yellowlegs were arriving in good numbers.

He didn't seem interested in shorebirds.

I told him about the self guiding nature trails that cut through four different ecosystems. He didn't seem interested in ecosystems, either.

I told him there were lots and lots of dolphins (just like Flipper) visible from shore and that there was a beach strategically positioned right next to those dolphin enriched waters for his viewing pleasure.

The cadaver never even blinked.

I invited him to step into the museum, a mere nine feet away, and enjoy the exhibits relating to Cape May's natural and seafaring heritage.

His enthusiasm quotient registered zero. Less than zero.

I told him there'd been an immature bald eagle soaring around the lighthouse that morning.

For the first time, the cadaver showed a measure of interest.

"Where?" he asked.

"Right here," I assured.

"When?" he demanded.

"This morning," I repeated, "about 10:00 o'clock."

"There aren't any eagles in New Jersey," he asserted.

"Yes there are," I promised.

"They're almost extinct," he advised me.

"Endangered," I agreed.

He didn't say anything for a moment. He just stood there, holding that rank stogie between his teeth, blocking the sunlight.

"I seen 'em in Florida," he said.

"Real handsome aren't they?" I encouraged.

"Yea," he said. "Real Handsome. Real shame," he added turning, leaving, pausing, flicking the

ash from his cigar.

And then he looked up.

I don't know what it is about birds of prey that makes them different from ... other things. But there is something. And they are different. Special.

I don't understand what it is that makes people who profess to have no interest in birds stop whatever they are doing to watch a soaring red-tail;

Couldn't tell you why nothing draws binoculars faster among a group of birders than the chant: "I've got a raptor over here;"

Couldn't begin to explain why a kid who wouldn't be caught dead birding would fight for a slot on his school's hawk watch team. Maybe Roxanne Kaiser can tell you this in her paper in Carol McIntyre's paper session on Saturday.

I just know that for as long as humans have known envy (and if the story on Cain and Able is any measure this is a long, long time) that people have been fascinated by birds of prey. Even today, something about their prowess, or freedom, or fierceness pierces the armor of our civilized lives and finds kinship in the blood.

I've known others, scientists, who could scarcely muster academic interest in the organisms they studied. A Ph.D. candidate I worked with in a marine laboratory, who was studying mummichogs. Why? They were his advisor's specialty.

There was another fellow. He was studying estuarine mud. How come? "Might be useful some day," he said with a shrug.

But I have never met the researcher, student, falconer, bander, hawk watcher, or rehaber who wasn't completely captivated; completely enamored of birds of prey.

The first fall I counted hawks in Cape May, the fall of 1976, I spent three months in close quarters with four of the hardest, hard core raptor banders that ever set hands to a lure line. In fact, one of them is co-authoring two papers to be presented at this conference. I'm sure Ted will verify everything I say.

Subsequent analysis of our 437 hours of evening conversation showed that a whopping 92.6% directly involved raptors. Five percent focused on sex, and 2.4% dealt with whose turn it was to get the beer.

I realize that that 5% figure seems very high. In retrospect I'm inclined to believe that it is an error. I'm guessing that the person who keyed in the data probably, probably mind you, lumped all discussions relating to courtship and mating without distinguishing between humans and raptors.

But my point is, and my point remains that birds of prey are exciting. They excite us, and they excite others. And that is the key, the very note I hope to strike in this address.

Because, folks the cadaver wearing the turquoise shorts is not the exception. People who have become environmentally disenfranchised because of where they live and what they do are society's norm.

Once, two and three and four generations ago, most Americans enjoyed a day to day intimacy with nature. They were farmers or ranchers or coastal fishermen, people who worked outdoors. That's all changed now. Now, in the orbit of urban and suburban lives, nature is tangential at best.

I've got a brother. He has a wife, two kids, demanding job, house in the burbs, plays a little golf, watches football on TV. They live right next to 350 acres of woodland complete with a maintained trail system. They never go into those woods. If the woods were developed tomorrow, their reaction would probably be relief.

They've taught the kids that when they get home, they are to go right inside and lock the door. The world isn't safe.

They've taught them to be afraid of wild animals. This way they figure they won't get bitten by a wolverine with AIDS or contract Lyme disease or hoof and mouth disease or something.

Actually, the tutelage was overkill. The kids don't want to go outside. At school they learned all about acid rain, pollution in the air, pollution in the water and all the dead dolphins washing up on shore.

They know that DDT makes things extinct and that earth has so much garbage on it, now, that everything has to be recycled.

They know that there's a big hole in the sky over Antarctica that lets in death rays so you have to cover up when you go outside.

A whole generation of kids nurtured on brown-side environmental issues. So not only are they estranged from nature they are afraid of it. They regard the environment as a dangerous and hostile place,

NOT the avenue to discovery and wonder that I knew, in that 350 acres of woodland behind my brother's house, the house I grew up in. The place where Red-tailed Hawks, and Broad-winged and Cooper's Hawks nested. The place where Goshawks and Long-eared Owls wintered and where migrating Osprey roosted on the islands of the 3rd Brick Yard Pond in April and October.

My niece and nephew just go home after school. They lock the door. And they turn on the TV.

Television, of course, hasn't done anybody's perception of the environment any big favors, either. Take your average nature show host. With his big toothy grin and his checkered lumberjack shirt (and his umpteen camera crews and his battery of line writers).

And he stares at you Average American sitting down in your Lazy-Boy recliner with your one hand elbow deep in the tortilla chips and the other wrapped around a cold one and he says:

"Today we're going to the wilds of Alaska and learn about the American Bald Eagle, our national bird." And for the next thirty minutes (sans commercials) TV viewers are brought to an intimacy with eagles that would take a lifetime to duplicate.

Through the magic eye of the camera they are taken right into the egg. They hatch with the chick. Get fed strips of salmon by attentive adults. Fledge. Fly. Pirate fish. Court, copulate, nest, and soar off into the sunset and a brighter tomorrow now that DDT is all gone and the world is safe for democracy.

What's the problem?

Well, if and when people finally do pry themselves away from the glass teat and actually do go outside hoping to see a living, free flying eagle, they are almost certain to be disappointed. How come? Because TV nature programs set up a series of expectations that cannot possibly be met in nature.

Only television eagles go through their entire life cycle in 30 minutes or less. Next to television eagles, the tiny black blob sitting on snag ¼ mile down river ...

1. That doesn't even have the good graces to have a white head or tail (like a real eagle).

2. That doesn't even have enough ambition to go catch a fish or build a nest or something, can only be a great big, fat disappointment.

Even though it's real.

Even though you try to explain to them that this is precisely what eagles do because being efficient foragers they can afford to just sit there and conserve energy.

You might think that any creature that can afford to sit in front of television and watch reruns of *Happy Days* or *I Dream of Jeannie* for hours on end would be able to appreciate this principle. But this isn't so.

There's another problem. From their TV experience, people get the impression that real nature (i.e., nature that's important enough to get on TV anyway) is always someplace else. Someplace wild. Someplace far, far away.

Their less than satisfying look at the sedentary, black blob on the snag just reinforces this misapprehension. They walk away thinking their eagle habitat is not as good as that place where eagles do everything in thirty minutes or less.

Therefore it's not as important.

Therefore, it's not worth saving.

Sadly, this kind of thinking has a way of becoming a self fulfilling prophesy in this age of this world.

There was a game we used to play, in grammar school. Maybe they still do. It was the teacher's safety valve for rainy day lunches, the graphite rod that dampened pre-vacation energy levels. The game was called musical chairs and this is how it worked.

A row of chairs would be set up back to back. All the students would form a line, encircling the chairs. Then the teacher would start the record player.

They didn't even have CDs yet.

Hell, they didn't even have stereo, yet.

The needle would scrape, the music would start and we'd march, around the chairs, until the music suddenly stopped. Then everyone would scramble for a seat.

There was a catch, of course. There weren't enough chairs to go around. Somebody, some Janie or some Johnny, was always left standing and this meant they had to leave the game.

It was lots of fun, musical chairs. Except when you lost.

The natural world is a lot like musical chairs. Nature calls the tunes, and the great life-long journey begins. And all along the way, living things, including birds of prey, must search for places to sit down.

A place to breed. A place to winter. Someplace to sit down during long migrations.

For a day or a week,

To rest and hunt and feed,

On that epic journey that binds the poles of a Peregrine or a Short-eared Owl's life.

But just like musical chairs, there aren't enough places to go around. Our species keeps removing them. A corner wood lot here. A rain forest down there. A third of a nation's wetlands excised by a president's pen.

It's not malice. It's not that people are not interested in protecting the environment. Everybody wants to protect the environment these days (or at least they did before the elections).

It's just that the environment is not REAL anymore. It's not immediate. It's no longer part of people's lives. They cannot relate.

And, this is the note I've taken so long to strike in this address. And the key is you. Because you, the people in this room command the very thing that can turn the heads of even the most sedentary urban dweller. And this is your understanding of, and your enthusiasm for, birds of prey.

I've watched it happen a hundred times. Any Saturday or Sunday at Cape May Point State Park in the fall. They begin to gather at 9:30 AM, couples and families, residents and visiting friends.

By 9:45, there's a crowd. By 9:55 it's a mob. By the time Master Bander Chris Schulz arrives with several long tubes tucked beneath an arm, 300 people might be assembled.

They are there because they have heard that if they come, they will catch a glimpse of one of the earth's most magical creatures.

A bird of prey.

In the next 45 minutes, while Chris talks, while the tubes surrender their treasures, those assembled might see kestrels and Merlins, Cooper's Hawks and Sharpies, Red-tailed Hawks and harriers-up close, in person, in three dimensions--REAL AS LIFE.

Because they are real as life.

From the mouth of someone who makes his lines up as he goes along they will learn about the dinner table reach of hunting Sharp-shinned Hawks. Or the parabolic properties of a harrier's facial disk. They will learn about the great exodus of birds sweeping over them and the importance of protecting natural habitat to insure their survival.

The next time they hear that some parcel of woodlands critical to the survival of the bird with the dinner table reach is on the auction block, when they learn that the loss of one-third of the nation's wetlands will mean less habitat for the bird with the parabolic face, maybe then the loss will have real meaning, will have a face! Maybe they will even decide that what might be gained is not worth the loss.

When Chris's last bird is released. When the applause falls off. The crowd falls away. Some to breakfast. Others to churches in town. But many remain, captured by Chris's enthusiasm.

They walk the short distance to the hawk watch platform and gaze upward not ready yet to turn their eyes away from this new window to the world that has been opened for them. A window to the natural world.

Of course, just looking through the window doesn't confer the proficiency it takes to understand

all that you see. Appreciation comes quickly. Proficiency takes time.

I've got another story. One that occurred at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. It's about beginning hawkwatchers, and I first told it at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary's 50th Anniversary. I promised the banding crew at Cape May that I'd tell it here.

Back in the fall of 1975, back when I was a young punk hawkwatcher with more ambition than good sense, I used to drive to Hawk Mountain every day. One hundred miles there, one hundred back regardless of the conditions.

The day I'm talking about was one of those blue-bird days when nothing is flying. The kind when people open their lunches at 10:00 AM. The kind where conversation on the North Lookout centers around how often to change the oil in your crankcase, whether vanilla wafers or graham crackers makes the best cheese cake crust, whether predestination precludes free will.

Right in front of me was a couple who knew even less about hawks than I did. Absolute entry level hawk watchers. You could tell ...

Every Turkey Vulture was cause for excitement and scrutiny. Every time the local RT popped into view, it got a different name.

I was pretty stubborn in those days. And sometimes when stubborness goes head to head with good sense stubborness wins.

I found a bird ... way out there. A frail suggestion of borderline fiction that phased in and out of the heat waves.

"I've got a bird I announced. Off the slope of one. *Waaaay* out," I cautioned.

Everyone strained to find the bird. Few did. The guy in front of me fell in the majority. He scanned left then right. He scanned up then down. He turned (to see if I was serious about there being a hawk out there). Seeing the look of concentration on my face he turned and tried again.

The bird got closer and what was the suggestion of a raptor took corporeal form. It was funny but at times it seemed as though the birds wings were lifted in a dihedral, like a vulture, but it wasn't dark enough to be a vulture and ... was it my imagination, or did the bird seem somewhat unsteady, tipsy, in flight.

A red-tailed would have been rock steady under these conditions and that left only one possibility.

"It's a Marsh Hawk!" I announced. (We called them Marsh Hawks, back then).

The guy in front of me spun around like he'd been smacked on the head. He damn near glowered at me then turned back up-ridge and jammed his binoculars into his eyes, determined to find this bird.

The bird drew closer, and the closer it came the more confident I became of my identification. About a half a mile out the bird turned away from the ridge and started off across the valley. A vagrant gust or updraft caught a wing turning the bird on its side, exposing a wink of brilliant white underparts.

"It's an adult male!" I shouted, "Adult male marsh hawk!" The bird was, and remains, my favorite raptor.

At this disclosure the guy in front of me dropped his binoculars. Shook his head. Leaned over

to his wife and said: "I can't believe this son-of-a-bitch behind me. I can't even find this bird, and he can see its genitiles."

He didn't actually say genitiles. He used another word that was a whole lot funnier.

I am like you, a raptor enthusiast, as enthusiastic as anyone here. I am a researcher only in the most generous sense of the word, and it is my respect for research that prompts me to admit this.

Having said this, I would like to plant a thought in you who are researchers, maybe even a spur. Research is the search for scientific truth. Scientific truth is the foundation of real knowledge. And knowledge serves best when it serves the course of action or inaction--if this is course that knowledge councils.

Every generation, it seems, has to fight some great pitched battle in the name of the environment. At the turn of the century, it was uncontrolled hunting. In the 1930s it was hawk shooting. In the 1960s and 70s it was DDT, and DDT taught us that nothing is done to an environment with impunity, that when you poke an environment here, it pushes something off a nest ledge over there.

Now, there is a new threat, a global threat to hawks and owls and many, many other living things. Its name is habitat loss, and it is the environmental challenge of our time.

I am asking you to use your knowledge and enthusiasm for birds of prey to open the eyes of others--to make the environment real to them, and its loss painful.

I am encouraging you to put your knowledge at the disposal of organizations concerned with habitat protection.

I am challenging you, who have standing and name recognition, to use the magic alure of raptors to catch the media and public attention.

And you students when taking on a new course load next semester, I am counseling you to include courses in public address and creative writing. It is important to speak the language of science, to communicate to peers. It is quite another thing to turn the phrases that turn the heads of legislatures--but this is what it is going to take if we are going to win the environmental challenge of this age.

Raptors, as you know, have developed strategies for survival and these strategies are predicated upon finding habitat that meets their needs. Now, our species is changing the game by calling a new tune that all other creatures must dance to. By claiming all the chairs in the room.

We have the option to protect birds of prey by protecting their habitat because we are intelligent, knowledgeable creatures.

We have the obligation to do so, because we are not intelligent or knowledgeable enough to know the global ramifications if we do not.

And if we do not? If we fail to meet the environmental challenge of our age. Well ...

When the game is over, and all other creatures have left the game, I wonder how we are going to feel about claiming our prize.

The last chair, in an empty room.

It's good to see so many chairs in this room, I wish us a successful conference.

## HARPY EAGLE RELEASES IN PANAMA AND BELIZE

by Angel Muela & Marta Curti

The Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) is one of the larger and more powerful raptors in the world. Historically, it was found in Neotropical forests from southern Mexico, through Central America, all the way to northern Argentina. Today, the Harpy Eagle has been extirpated from much of Central America mainly due to poaching and deforestation. Panama is perhaps the only country that still has a relatively stable population in the region.

The Peregrine Fund's efforts to better understand the decline of the species in this region began in 1989 when the first field work was carried out. Since then, additional effort has focused on the experimental captive breeding and release of young harpies in forests where they once were present. In 2001, The Peregrine Fund built the Neotropical Raptor Center, a captive breeding facility in Panama. Once the center was completed, Harpy Eagle breeding pairs were transferred from The Peregrine Fund's headquarters in Boise, Idaho to this new facility. In 2002, the first Harpy chicks hatched, and before the end of the year they began to be released in Soberania National Park, Panama. In 2003, the release program expanded to include the forests of Belize.

The release process for one Harpy Eagle is long and arduous. For the first five months, the chicks remain at the NRC where they are cared for by biologists. At five months of age, once they have fledged, they are then transferred to a specially designed aviary in the middle of the forest in which they will be released. An array of biologists is needed to keep track of all the released birds. We must provide the Harpy Eagles with food every few days and track them as they disperse from the release site. We continue to do this until the birds are able to hunt on their own, which usually occurs when they are between one to two years of age.

Several of the Harpy Eagles that have been released in Panama have become completely independent of our care. Many others have exhibited hunting behavior and should become independent within the next few months. Once the birds are no longer dependent on humans for food they will be trapped and relocated to more remote forests within Panama and Belize.

Prior to their relocation, most of the harpies will be fitted with a satellite transmitter (PTT) so that their movements can be tracked over time. This useful technology will allow us to keep track of a large number of harpies with minimal effort. Ideally, the information obtained from these units will yield important data about the dispersal patterns, mortality rates, and nesting attempts for this species.

One of the major milestones for the program will occur when the released birds begin to reproduce in the wild. However, Harpy Eagles do not reach sexual maturity until they are approximately four to five years of age. Therefore, we expect to see the first breeding attempts by the released birds within the next three years.

The Peregrine Fund collaborates with a variety of individuals and organizations in Panama and Belize including, in Panama: The National Environmental Authority (ANAM), the Panama Canal Authority (ACP), City of Knowledge, and the Ecological Police; and in Belize: The Belize Zoo, Programme for Belize, and the Forestry Department and Conservation Division. This work is funded in part by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), The Wolf Creek Charitable Foundation, and other generous donors.

## THE PEREGRINE FUND'S WEST INDIES PROJECT

by Russell Thorstrom

The islands of the Caribbean are not only an ideal and popular vacation destination, they are also known as one of the world's most important biodiversity hot-spots. The Caribbean region has a high number of endemic plants and animals as well as a rapidly growing human population that threatens the islands' natural ecosystems and habitats.

The Peregrine Fund has directed its research and conservation effort to the raptors of the Caribbean since 2002. Our goals are to better understand the population biology and factors limiting raptor species' distribution and abundance, and achieve conservation of the most threatened endemic species. Our first efforts have focused on the Ridgway's Hawk (*Buteo ridgwayi*) and Grenada Hook-billed Kite (*Chondrohierax uncinatus mirus*), and developing the means and methods to study and conserve these species by developing local capacity for conservation through training and by increasing public awareness.

The critically endangered Ridgway's Hawk is found on the island of Hispaniola, the second largest island in the Caribbean which includes the countries of Haiti, in the western one-third, and Dominican Republic, in the eastern two-thirds of the island. The critically endangered status of the Ridgway's Hawk is based on its population size consisting of no more than 250 individuals. Realistically this number may be much less. Its current distribution appears to be restricted to the forest and secondary vegetation of Los Haitises National Park of northeastern Dominican Republic, and surrounding forest fragments. Since the first study conducted in 1976 on the species in Los Haitises National Park, forested habitat has decreased dramatically. The loss of habitat, along with direct human persecution, appears to be the most significant cause for the Ridgway's Hawk's decline.

Studies began in Dominican Republic in 2002 with initial surveys to find as many Ridgway's Hawks as possible. Working with and training local cooperators Jesús Almonte (Fundacion Moscoso Puello, Inc.) and Samuel Balbuena (Dominican Republic National Parks), the major accomplishment of this project has been to find Ridgway's Hawk pairs within Los Haitises National Park and surrounding sites. Also in 2004 we provided a week-long training workshop in Panamá to Jesús Almonte and Pedro Rodriguez (Sociedad Ornitologica de la Hispaniola). The workshop included observation and interaction with TPF's successful education program occurring in Panamá on another endangered raptor, the Harpy Eagle. They gained experience in environmental education and conservation awareness methods and techniques which they integrated into a public awareness program focused on the Ridgway's Hawk in Dominican Republic.

The endangered race of the Grenada Hook-billed Kite is found only on the small island of Grenada (310 $km^2$ in area), the southern-most Caribbean island of the Lesser Antilles. The Peregrine Fund has provided support and training to kite researcher Desmond McQueen to find and monitor nesting kites throughout the island.

The Peregrine Fund is collaborating and working with numerous local individuals and organizations in Dominican Republic, such as Sociedad Ornitologica Hispaniola (SOH) - Pedro Rodgriguez and Eladio Fernandez; Fundacion Moscoso Puello, Inc. (FMP) - Jesús Almonte and Carlos Garcia; and Samuel Balbuena and Juan Cespedes of the National Parks Department. In Grenada we are collaborating with Alan Joseph and Michael Jessamy, training Desmond McQueen of the Grenada Forestry Department, and working with Bonnie Rusk of the Grenada Dry Forest Conservation Project. This work is funded in part by the U.S. Agency for International Development, Wolf Creek Charitable Trust, and other important donors.

## COUNTING OCEAN-TO-OCEAN
## FIRST INTERCONTINENTAL MIGRATION COUNT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED IN PANAMA

This past autumn, conservationists from North, South, and Central America descended on the Isthmus of Panama to record a flight of more than three million birds of prey during the first transcontinental count of raptors, a feat that many raptor biologists consider the most important intercontinental monitoring effort ever attempted in the New World.

Conducted across six weeks from October 4 through November 14 along the 51-mile long Panama Canal at the narrowest point of Isthmus of Panama, the *Rapaces de océano a océano*, or the Great Ocean-to-Ocean Raptor Migration Count, recorded a total of over 3.1 million raptors.

The project marks the first time anyone had attempted simultaneous counts of migratory raptors at sites across the full width of the Isthmus. Coordinated by Panama Audubon, with funding from the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, hawkwatch collaborators included CEASPA, The Peregrine Fund, the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, the Canopy Tower Hotel, and Gamboa Rainforest Resort. ANCON, the University of Panamá, ACP, ARI, Alcaldía de Panamá, Servicio de Protección Institucional, and ANAM provided support and permission to work at watch sites under their jurisdictions.

To record all visible migrants passing through the Isthmus, the hawkwatch included nine watchsites stretching from the Pacific to the Atlantic: Cerro Ancon, the Peregrine Fund's Neotropical Raptor Center at the Ciudad del Saber, Cerro Luisa, Gold Hill, the Canopy Tower Hotel, Gamboa Rainforest Resort, the Smithsonian's Barro Colorado Island Laboratory, and sites near the communities of Escobal and Achiote. More than 40 observers participated in the count, including international volunteers from the United States, Canada, Argentina, Costa Rica, and Mexico, together with Panama Audubon members, Smithsonian, students from the University of Panama, and the residents of the Escobal and Achiote communities. Included among the participants were Hawk Mountain's Kyle McCarty and Keith Bildstein, and Sanctuary board members Stephen Oresman and Jim Kushlan.

"An ocean-to-ocean count of raptors traveling through central Panama has long been the 'Holy Grail' for raptor-migration scientists and conservationists," explained Keith Bildstein, Hawk Mountain's director of conservation science, "Until now, the lack of human willpower and financial resources has forestalled this ambitious and important project. This autumn, however, that dream became a reality."

Chelina Batista, a Hawk Mountain conservation intern trainee in the spring of 2001, coordinated the event and acted as liaison for the numerous volunteers and project partners. "Hawk Mountain has long held that bringing people and birds of prey together at migration hotspots helps conservationists better protect these important sentinels of environmental change. Chelina Batista took that concept to a new level, orchestrating an event that introduced more people to more birds of prey than any raptor migration count in history. Hawk Mountain Sanctuary is extremely proud of her accomplishment," Bildstein said.

The first record of raptor migration in Panama was made by Spanish historian Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, who, writing in 1526 noted in the Darien of eastern Panama, "Some years in the month of March, I have seen over the space of 15 or 20 days ... the sky covered with birds almost morning to night ... They ... cover the whole sky from north to south and a wide section east to west. Apparently most of these birds are eagles and many large species of other birds of prey."

Ornithologists Frank Chapman and Alexander Wetmore introduced the movements to modern science in the first half of the last century. Neal Smith of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute made the first systematic count of migrants between 1970 and 1982 from several locations. Smith's maximum count was 981,000 birds in 1982. In 1998, the Smithsonian's George Angehr organized simultaneous counts at Cerro Ancon, the Bahai Temple, and the Canopy Tower, and recorded 1.6 million raptors. These counts, plus recent efforts organized by CEASPA near the Caribbean coast, showed that conducting simultaneous counts at a number of sites across the Isthmus would help evaluate the timing and routes used by the migrants.

In addition to its scientific value, *Rapaces de océano a océano* will produce important baseline information for raptor conservationists and individuals interested in developing raptor-based ecotourism in the region.

Because raptors fly only during the day and during good weather, they require safe havens for nighttime and rainy day roosting. Protected forests along the Canal, including Soberania, Camino de Cruces, and San Lorenzo National Parks, the Metropolitan Nature Park, Barro Colorado Nature Monument, and the West Bank of the Canal Area and other sites protected by ARI, provide a vital refuge and rest stop for these species, especially since much of the remaining surrounding area has been deforested. Protecting these forests will help promote the continued survival of these species.

Raptor migrations in Latin America already have generated intense interest in Mexico and Costa Rica, where local communities have benefitted economically from increased ecotourism associated with the concentrated movements of migrants. This year's count suggests that Panama has a raptor migration at least as spectacular as that occurring elsewhere in Latin America, and that its economy, too, can benefit with development of raptor-based ecotourism.

Although the concentrated movements of long-distance, land-based raptor migrants in the region have attracted the attention of scientists and naturalists for centuries, few people in Panama were aware of them until this autumn. Newspaper accounts and television reports of the counts have begun to build enthusiasm for the flight among Panamanians, and the hope is that the new level of recognition of this wildlife spectacle will lead to better natural resource management in the country.

Now the plan is to make *Rapaces de océano a océano* an annual event. Chelina and her crew are looking for volunteers. Commitment of at least two weeks is essential. Experience identifying migrants is a must. Anyone interested in being placed on a list of potential volunteers should email Keith Bildstein at bildstein@hawkmtn.org with information on their background in hawkwatching and the amount of time they would be willing to stay in Panama counting migrants.

# II NEOTROPICAL RAPTOR CONFERENCE and SYMPOSIUM ON RAPTORS OF THE SOUTHERN CONE

**Iguazú, Argentina**
**11-14 June 2006**

The Neotropical Raptor Network (NRN) invites you to the Second Neotropical Raptor Conference, with a Symposium on Raptors of the Southern Cone. Join scientists, conservationists, resource managers, falconers, representatives of zoos, government and non-government organizations, and other persons and institutions with an interest in research and/or conservation of birds of prey in Latin America and the Caribbean to participate in a meeting to share knowledge, interests, and concerns and help develop a network of practitioners in the fields of raptor conservation, research, captive breeding, and falconry.

***The Location***
Iguazú, Argentina is home to one of nature's spectacular displays, Iguazú Falls. It is an international tourist destination and also a symbol of the Atlantic Forest, one of the most threatened biomes of the Neotropics, and home to many raptor species, some of which are rare or endemic.

***Presentations and Submission of Abstracts*** *- received from 1 March 2005 to 1 February 2006*
Abstracts may be written in Spanish, English, or Portuguese; they may not be any longer than 250 words. Presentations may be oral or poster format in any one of the three mentioned languages. There will be simultaneous translation for the oral presentations.

***Workshops*** *- Opportunities for workshops will be offered and topics are open to suggestion.*
Currently a workshop addressing captive breeding of raptors and a second addressing falconry legislation in Argentina and Brazil are being considered.

***Registration***

| **until 1 February 2006** | | | **after 1 February 2006** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Non-Latin American | US$250 | | Non-Latin American | US$300 |
| Latin American Professional | US$150 | | Latin American Professional | US$180 |
| Latin American Student | US$95 | | Latin American Student | US$115 |

***Travel Awards*** *- final deadline for travel award applications is 1 February 2006*
The Peregrine Fund will contribute a limited number of travel awards to participants presenting papers or posters from Latin America and the Caribbean who demonstrate a special need for financial support. Hawk Mountain Sanctuary will provide a limited number of travel awards to conference attendees presenting papers or posters on raptor migration. *The applicant must be a citizen and resident of a Latin American or Caribbean country, and the first author and giving an oral or poster presentation.*

***Sponsors and Supportive Institutions***
The Second Neotropical Raptor Conference is a collaborative effort coordinated by the NRN; its primary sponsors are: The Peregrine Fund (USA), Sheraton Internacional Iguazú Resort (Argentina), and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association (USA). It is also supported by associated institutions: Museo de La Plata (Argentina), Aves Argentina/AOP (Argentina), Güira-Oga (Argentina), and IADIZA-CONICET (Argentina). Institutions or individuals interested in sponsoring or supporting this event should contact Cameron Ellis at cellis@peregrinefund.org.

For more information, visit the NRN website: **http://www.neotropicalraptors.org**.

# 4th SYMPOSIUM ON ASIAN RAPTORS - MALAYSIA 2005
# "TOWARDS CONSERVATION OF ASIAN RAPTORS THROUGH SCIENCE AND ACTION"

**Taiping, Perak, Malaysia (West Malaysia)**
**28-31 October 2005**

The Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network (ARRCN) is organising the 4th Symposium on Asian Raptors from 28-31 October 2005, in Taiping, Malaysia, hosted jointly with the Malaysian Nature Society.

**Symposium Objectives**

- To promote the conservation of raptors and their habitats in Asia through sharing of scientific knowledge, resources, and research techniques.
- To improve networking and cooperation amongst raptor researchers, agencies, and NGOs for the common goal of global raptor conservation.
- To increase awareness of the importance of raptor conservation among the public, local communities, and government agencies, through education, training, and cooperation.

**Symposium Scientific Sessions**

Session I. Raptor Conservation: Papers relating to any aspect of raptor conservation biology and ecology. Includes papers, applied or academic, that contribute to knowledge and techniques on raptors and their habitats.

Session II. Raptor Migration: A special session relating to any aspect of raptor migration, including project reports, papers that contribute to knowledge and techniques on raptor migration.

Session III. Raptor Medicine: Papers relating to the veterinary care, husbandry, diseases and any related topics of wild raptors or those in captivity. This section will include papers that contribute towards the knowledge and understanding of raptor captive breeding and re-introduction from a veterinary perspective.

**Symposium Programme**

| Day | Time | Programme |
|---|---|---|
| 28 Oct | 0900 | Early arrivals observe raptor migration at Taiping Resort |
| | 1400 | Registration |
| 29 Oct | 0830-1010, 1100-1300 | Session I. Raptor Conservation |
| | 1400-1630 | Workshop I. Raptor Migration Study Techniques |
| | 1700-1900 | Workshop 2. Migration and Satellite Tracking |
| 30 Oct | 0830-1010 | Session II. Raptor Migration |
| | 1100-1300 | Session III. Raptor Medicine |
| | 1430-1630 | Workshop 3. Habitat Use and Data Analysis for Conservation |
| | 1700-1900 | Poster Session |
| 31 Oct | 0830 | Excursion to observe raptors and raptor migration |
| | 2000 | Closing ceremony and banquet dinner |

For more information about the symposium, see **http://www5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~raptor/FINAL_ANNOUNCE-4thAsianRapSympo2005.htm** or contact Mike H. N. Chong (phone: 603-4107-1958, e-mail: mikechn@pc.jaring.my).

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### 2005

**October 12-16**
**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2005 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
**Green Bay, Wisconsin**
*contact:* **http://biology.boisestate.edu/raptor** or Dan Varland (phone: 1-360-538-4582, e-mail: daniel. varland@rayonier.com)

**October 28-31**
**4th SYMPOSIUM ON ASIAN RAPTORS - MALAYSIA 2005 "TOWARDS CONSERVATION OF ASIAN RAPTORS THROUGH SCIENCE AND ACTION"**
**Taiping, Malaysia**
*contact:* **http://www5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~raptor/FINAL_ANNOUNCE-4thAsianRapSympo2005.htm** or Mike H. N. Chong (phone: 603-4107-1958, e-mail: mikechn@pc.jaring.my)

### 2006

**June 11-14**
**II NEOTROPICAL RAPTOR CONFERENCE AND SYMPOSIUM ON RAPTORS OF THE SOUTHERN CONE**
**Iguazú, Argentina**
*contact:* **http://www.neotropicalraptors.org** or Cameron Ellis (e-mail: cellis@peregrinefund.org)

**October 2-7**
**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2006 ANNUAL CONFERENCE (4th NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE)**
**Veracruz, Mexico**

### 2007

**September 12-16**
**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2007 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
**Allentown, Pennsylvania**

## PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

**"SPATIAL ANALYSIS IN RAPTOR ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION"** (ISBN: 968-5712-14-9) Edited by Ricardo Rodríguez-Estrella and Luis A. Bojórquez-Tapia, this 212-page book contains 10 papers on spatial modeling, including some presented at RRF's 1999 Annual Meeting in La Paz. The book may be purchased for US$70 + shipping from Centro de Investigaciones Biologicas del Noroeste S.C. (CIBNOR). Inquiries may be directed to Karla Yahira Mercado Savin (kmercado@cibnor.mx).

## REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

**ARE BLACKFLIES KILLING YOUR NESTLINGS?** Work on Red-tailed Hawks and Great Horned Owls in the Yukon, and Red-tailed Hawks in Wyoming suggests that blackfly attacks on nestling raptors can kill; either directly through blood loss and trauma, or indirectly through the impacts of a blood parasite transmitted by the flies. I'm interested in any information on the observation of blackflies on nestlings and/or evidence of attacks (scabbing around the neck, large numbers of apparently healthy young falling from nests) in these or other raptor species. Please contact Frank Doyle (e-mail: doyle@bulkley.net, phone/fax: 1-250-846-5100).

## ASSISTANCE OFFERED

**THE PEREGRINE FUND MAINTAINS A COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH LIBRARY** with an ornithological emphasis. We post searchable catalogs of our library and reprint collections (16,000 and 17,000 records, respectively) and an inventory of our journal holdings, which include full or partial runs of about 1,200 titles, on our website: **www.peregrinefund.org** (go to "Research Library"). We will provide free pdf versions of any article in our collection for non-commercial scholarly use to

any researcher, anywhere, free of charge. Requests should be directed to library@peregrinefund.org, where they will be filled by our library assistant, Travis Rosenberry. Questions or suggestions should be directed to me at lkiff@peregrinefund.org. We will appreciate any pdf or hard copies of reprints that our colleagues may wish to contribute to this effort. - Lloyd Kiff, The Peregrine Fund

## NEWS OF MEMBERS

**Fred Gehlbach** is now in his 37th year of studies on urban Eastern Screech-Owls in central Texas and has finished his 10-year study of the comparative influences of cultural and natural factors on nesting biology and guild dynamics of coexisting Whiskered and Western Screech-Owls, Flammulated Owls, Northern Pygmy-Owls, and Elf Owls in Cave Creek and Ramsey canyons, southeastern Arizona. His field work on those species goes back 50 years (intermittently). A paper on Whiskered and Northern Pygmy owl predation on diurnal lizards with nocturnal activity has been published (*Southwestern Naturalist*, 2003), and manuscripts are in preparation on the adaptive significance of the pygmy owl's false eyes, an El Niño-driven system of limiting factors, and monograph of the entire study, which includes topics such as an assembly rule for cavity nesters, and the adaptive significance of cluster nesting. A project on voice recognition and inter-specific vocal mimicry between Whiskered and Western Screech owls remains unfinished. Fred will return to his base of Arizona field work (Southwestern Research Station) for a few weeks in May-June to continue the latter project and begin planning a symposium of long-term ecological studies in the Cave Creek watershed with Dr. Dawn Wilson (Director of SWRS), sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History.

## FOR SALE

**RRF PUBLICATIONS** Back issues of *The Journal of Raptor Research* (TJRR) Vol. 1-30 and all Raptor Research Reports may be purchased directly from RRF (Jim Fitzpatrick, Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center, 12805 St. Croix Trail S, Hastings, MN 55033, USA; phone: 1-651-437-4359; fax: 1-651-438-2908; e-mail: jim@carpenternaturecenter.org). Some older issues are not available. See **http://biology.boisestate.edu/raptor/JRR.htm** for details and prices. Orders for four or more issues receive a 30% discount. RRF decals and pins also are available. Vol. 31+ of TJRR may be purchased from the Ornithological Societies of North America (5400 Bosque Boulevard, Suite 680, Waco, TX 76710, USA; 1-254-399-9636; phone: 1-254-399-9636; fax: 1-254-776-3767; e-mail: business@osnabirds.org; web: **http://www.osnabirds.org**).

## *WINGSPAN* CONTRIBUTIONS

The Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. thanks the following people who contributed material to this issue of *Wingspan*: **Mike Chong, Frank Doyle, Pete Dunne, Cameron Ellis, Fred Gehlbach, Judith Henckel, Lloyd Kiff, Mary Linkevich, Bill Mattox, Brian Millsap, Angel Muela, Ricardo Rodríguez-Estrella, Russell Thorstrom, Dan Varland, Munir Virani, Sean Walls, David Wiens,** and **Petra Bohall Wood**.

*Wingspan* welcomes contributions from RRF members and others interested in raptor biology and management. Articles and announcements should be sent, faxed, or e-mailed to the editor: Leonard Young, 1640 Oriole Lane NW, Olympia, WA 98502-4342, USA (phone/fax: 1-360-943-7394, e-mail: rrfwingspan@comcast.net). Deadline for the next issue is August 7, 2005.

## RECENT THESES ON RAPTORS

The U.S. Geological Survey's Richard R. Olendorff Memorial Library greatly appreciates receiving a copy of each thesis abstracted in *Wingspan*. This allows the Library to make theses available to scientists and managers worldwide through its Raptor Information System (RIS, see *Wingspan* 7(1):16). Please send theses to: Olendorff Memorial Library, U.S. Geological Survey, Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center, Snake River Field Station, 970 Lusk Street, Boise, ID 83706, USA.

**Walls, S. S. 2004. HOW SOCIALITY, WEATHER AND OTHER FACTORS AFFECT THE LEAVING, TRANSITION AND SETTLING PHASES OF DISPERSAL IN THE BUZZARD *BUTEO BUTEO*. Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. Reading, UK.**

Dispersal is an ecological phenomenon that determines the distribution of species within their environment. If population models are to be spatially dynamic, it is important to understand all three phases of dispersal: (i) leaving, (ii) transition and (iii) settling. This thesis presents and analyses detailed data for the individual phases of dispersal in the buzzard *Buteo buteo*. Such data, suitable for spatial modelling of all three phases for dispersal of any vertebrate species, are exceptional.

Juvenile buzzards in Dorset, UK, were radio-tagged and then tracked to record when they left their natal area and their subsequent movements. More intensive intermittent tracking over two weeks was used to estimate where buzzards position home ranges with respect to breeders and non-breeders. Finally, a continuous all-day track was carried out to investigate the consequences of early natal dispersal by comparing time budgets.

Leaving appeared very dependent on earthworm availability and occurred during good weather, with no evidence that preceding bad weather initiated dispersal. Juveniles that did not disperse had a strong positive association with the nest, suggesting that the parental territories may provide a safe haven for their offspring. Investigation of the transition phase indicated that it took less than ten days and was affected by the weather. Buzzards leaving during higher temperatures and when the winds had changed to a more southerly direction dispersed further. Dispersed buzzards settled within the areas of higher nest density within the study area, but in the gaps between territories. Home range overlap showed small exclusive cores that could be shared by siblings in their first year. The conservation values of these elements are discussed and the three phases of dispersal are combined as the basis for a spatially explicit population model.

**Wiens, J. D. 2004. POST-FLEDGING SURVIVAL AND NATAL DISPERSAL OF NORTHERN GOSHAWKS IN ARIZONA. M.S. Thesis, Colorado State Univ., Fort Collins.**

Effective conservation and management plans for wildlife populations require knowledge of how fluctuating environmental conditions affect demographic rates. Due to their low densities and elusive behavior within the dense forest habitats they occupy, existing demographic information for the Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) is limited primarily to the non-juvenile age-class. However, juvenile survival and dispersal may make important contributions to Northern Goshawk population dynamics. As part of a long-term demographic study, I used information-theoretic methods to examine post-fledging survival and natal dispersal relative to environmental, spatial, and individual sources of variation within an isolated population of Northern Goshawks in Arizona. The study included 614 color-banded juveniles produced on 121 breeding territories during 1991 - 2004, 89 of which were radio-marked during 1998 - 2001. Survival during the first 12 weeks after fledging was 0.71 (95% CI = 0.53, 0.84). The best-fitting known fate models predicted survival as a function of time since fledging, annual changes in key bird and mammal prey populations on the study area, and gender-specific differences in pre-fledging body mass. Juveniles exhibited

higher survival and initiated dispersal from natal territories at an earlier date, but not at a younger age, in years when food was more abundant. A low first-year fidelity rate of radio-marked juveniles to the study population (28%), juvenile dispersal movements of up to 442 km, a low overall return rate of color-banded nestlings (11%), and a delayed age at first breeding ($\bar{X} \pm SE = 4.21 \pm 0.31$ years) suggested a high level of competition for breeding territories on the study area, forcing locally-produced juveniles to either wait several years to gain a breeding vacancy or emigrate. Color-banded nestlings that successfully recruited to the local breeding population settled a median distance of 15.0 km from their natal nest (range = 0.1 to 58.1 km), a distance about four times the diameter of an average territory (3.8 km). In combination with data showing relatively short breeding dispersal distances of adults, my study provided evidence that movement and gene flow among naturally fragmented Northern Goshawk populations in the southwestern United States is achieved primarily through the survival and dispersal of juveniles. Of the sources of variation examined relative to juvenile survival and dispersal, food abundance was consistently found to be an important predictor, suggesting that conservation strategies for the Northern Goshawk should account for factors limiting key prey populations.

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